

August 11, 2009 - Officials Break Ground for Waterline Replacement Project in Point Marion

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HS

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POINT MARION - Water
will be flowing soon through new pipes in Point Marion.

Officials and community members gathered Monday at the Point Marion Community Park to participate in the long-awaited groundbreaking ceremony for the \$2 million waterline replacement project.

U.S. Rep. John P. Murtha, D-Johnstown, and officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced their commitment to the project and pledged their ongoing support.

"Infrastructure projects like this are essential to the health and welfare of our constituents, but the local community can't always afford to build them. That's the exact reason we created the South Central Pennsylvania Environmental Infrastructure program. I am fortunate to be able to fund this program each year so communities like Point Marion can build their projects at an affordable rate to their customers," he said.

Murtha also noted the vital role that the USDA and Army Corps play to ensure infrastructure projects in rural community go forward.

"The USDA has been a tremendous partner over my years in Congress and they, the Army Corps and all participants, should be commended for the work they have done here," Murtha said.

The \$2,212,000 project involved the replacement and installation of waterlines, service connections, valves and hydrants in Point Marion and a portion of Springhill Township. A 50,000-gallon water storage tank also will be constructed.

The borough received a \$500,000 grant from the Army Corps of Engineers to help pay for the project and will borrow \$1,662,000 from USDA Rural Development.

State grants also were received to help pay for the project from the state Department of Community and Economic Development.

Col. Michael Crall, Pittsburgh district engineer for the Army Corps of Engineers, said great things happen when agencies and people pool their resources and work together.

"Great projects such as this come about when local, state and federal partners work together to help improve people's lives," he said. "The South Central Pennsylvania Environmental Infrastructure Program provides a vehicle for the Corps to assist local communities with the design and construction of water supply, storage and distribution facilities. This Point Marion project will not only benefit this community, it will contribute to the national goal of improving environmental quality."

Tom Williams, state director of USDA Rural Development, said the community benefits when projects that improve the quality of life and environment go forward.

"The Point Marion residents in the service area that will be covered by the waterline replacement will benefit with an improved quality of life," he said.

Point Marion Borough Council President Alfred DuBois said council has been working on the waterline replacement project for several years.

"We're anxious to see things get started," he said.

DuBois said the water pipes in the borough are "a 100-plus years old," noting that the old pipes are deteriorating and break easily. Water line breaks are dealt with on a regular basis, he said.

Monday's groundbreaking ceremony was something council has been waiting to see happen for a long time, he said, adding that he appreciates the support from Murtha and the USDA Rural Development and Army Corps of Engineers.

"It really means a lot to know they are there helping us all that they can. We're very pleased with all the reports we've heard from Congressman Murtha, Col. Kroll and Mr. Williams, and we're anxious to have the new waterlines installed," DuBois said.